

PISA 2022 Creative Thinking Assessment

The PISA 2022 Creative Thinking Assessment was the first time the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) formally measured creative thinking as a standalone skill across many countries. Rather than testing artistic talent, the assessment focused on students' ability to generate, evaluate, and improve ideas in practical contexts.

What It Measured

The study defined creative thinking as the capacity to:

- Produce original and diverse ideas
- Refine or improve existing ideas
- Approach problems from multiple perspectives
- Apply imagination to real-world situations

Tasks were not art projects. They included scenarios such as:

- Designing solutions to everyday problems
 - Writing short narratives or slogans
 - Proposing improvements to objects or systems
 - Interpreting visual or social situations creatively
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Key Findings (High-Level)

- Creativity is teachable and measurable. The assessment demonstrated that creative thinking is not just an innate trait; it can be evaluated through structured exercises.
- Wide variation among countries and student groups. Performance differed significantly across nations and socioeconomic backgrounds, suggesting that access to opportunity and learning environments matters.
- Strong link to confidence and openness. Students who reported higher curiosity, persistence, and willingness to try new approaches tended to perform better.
- Balanced instruction matters. Systems that encouraged exploration, discussion, and problem-based learning often aligned with stronger creative-thinking outcomes.

- Equity gaps exist. Socio-economic disparities influenced results, indicating that creativity development is affected by resources and support systems, not just ability.

What the Study Did Not Claim

- It did not conclude that schools are failing universally.
- It did not equate creativity solely with the arts.
- It did not identify one singular cause for stronger or weaker performance.

Why It Matters

The OECD framed creative thinking as a core 21st-century competency alongside literacy and numeracy. The study emphasized that innovation, adaptability, and complex problem solving are increasingly important in modern economies and civic life.

In essence, the report suggests that creativity is less about producing attractive final work and more about developing the mental habits of questioning, experimenting, and refining ideas — skills that benefit students far beyond the classroom.